

Responsible Missourians Initiative

For Grades 5–8

Initiative Overview:

The focus of this initiative by Secretary of State Matt Blunt is to teach Missouri's young people about the importance of participation in our democratic republic, and the importance of taking ownership and interest in community and current events. The 5th through 8th grade packet contains lessons to enhance teacher-led discussions about citizenship, responsibility and Missouri government. For additional information, games and fun facts for students, visit the Missouri Secretary of State Internet site at www.sos.mo.gov

This lesson complements MAP and Show-Me Standards in Social Studies and Communication Arts. A breakdown of the relevant strands and standards may be found on page 14.

Instructional Procedures for 5th Grade through 8th Grade Students:

This lesson has eight components:

- ◆ A lesson on the meaning and importance of citizenship
- ◆ A lesson on the history of voting in the United States of America
- ◆ A lesson on participation among 18–24-year-olds from 1972 to the present
- ◆ A lesson on the importance of volunteerism
- ◆ A class discussion on volunteerism and ways to be a responsible citizen of Missouri and the United States of America
- ◆ A class discussion on the importance of keeping up on community and current events by reading newspapers, listening and watching the news on television and radio stations and discussing the issues with family and friends
- ◆ A lesson on Missouri government. Information can be found on page 3
- ◆ A class project/assignment for students to apply what they have learned. See page 13

1) Begin the lesson by explaining citizenship, the elements of citizenship, and the importance of each citizen's success in carrying out the duties associated with citizenship. Students can take turns writing words that pertain to citizenship on the chalkboard, until they have ten or more listed.

2) Distribute copies of the 15th, 19th and 26th Amendments to students and give a brief history of the trials and tribulations leading up to the points when 18-year-olds, women, and minorities secured the right to vote. Stress the importance that the right to vote was earned. Please refer to the material on page 8 that lists the events leading up to the passage of the amendments and the acquisition of voting rights for women and minorities.

3) Distribute a copy of the statistical chart on page 9 showing the decline in voter participation among 18–24-year-olds from 1972 to the present. Students should study this chart. Explain to students the importance of participation in our democratic republic, and the consequences of the current trend of low voter participation if it continues.

- 4) In a teacher-led discussion, review the statistics on volunteerism among adolescents listed on page 11. Discuss the different types of volunteerism and stress how volunteerism contributes to society.
- 5) Students should break into groups of four or five. Students should list possible reasons for the decline in voter participation among 18–24-year-olds, whether or not they plan to vote when they are 18 and reasons why students their age would choose to volunteer in their communities and schools. Students should present their group findings to the class. The teacher will lead this discussion but should encourage the class to share as many ideas as possible.
- 6) Review with students the information about Missouri statewide elected officials, the Missouri General Assembly and the Missouri judiciary system. Discuss the roles and responsibilities of all three.
- 7) Have students come to class ready to discuss a current event in federal, state or local government and how this issue could affect them personally or their families.
- 8) Have students complete the exercises and assignments on page 13.

Learning Goals:

- ◆ To engage students in an age-appropriate discussion of citizenship, democracy and community involvement
- ◆ To provide students with an appreciation of participation in our democratic republic by reviewing the history of voting in the United States of America
- ◆ To encourage students to exercise their citizenship fully and encourage participation in our democratic republic
- ◆ To develop a trend toward improving election participation among 18–24-year-old citizens
- ◆ To increase awareness of the importance of registering to vote and voting

Learning Objectives:

After this unit, students will be able to—

- ◆ Recognize elements and components of citizenship and its importance to society, democracy and themselves
- ◆ Provide examples of ways to be a responsible citizen

Learning Assessment:

Students will work in groups to discuss the material presented in class and will list the various ways they can become more active in their schools and communities. A one-page writing assignment on what it means to be a responsible citizen of Missouri and the United States of America is also included.

Target level:

This lesson targets 5th grade through 8th grade students. It complements lessons planned around the topics of civic duty, democracy and government.



Statewide Elected Officials in Missouri

Governor

In Missouri, the governor is the top elected official in the Executive Branch. The Executive Branch of government is in charge of enforcing laws made by the Legislative Branch. Some of the governor's powers include: choosing directors of state agencies, choosing citizens for boards and official groups, and filling empty positions in county offices. The governor also appoints judges. The governor is the commander in chief of the Missouri National Guard.

Each January the governor delivers a speech called the "State of the State" address to the Missouri Legislature and submits a state budget. After the legislature passes a bill the governor has the power to sign the bill into law or prevent it from becoming a law by vetoing it. When the governor vetoes a bill, the legislature can pass it anyway if 2/3 of the Senate and the House vote for it.

The governor also has the power to pardon individuals who have committed crimes, call special sessions for the legislature, and call out the National Guard for state emergencies.

The Missouri Constitution says the governor must be at least 30 years old, a U.S. citizen for 15 years, and a resident of Missouri for 10 years. The governor may only serve two four-year terms.

Lieutenant Governor

The lieutenant governor serves as the president of the Missouri Senate and can vote to break a tie. The lieutenant governor also serves on many boards and official groups.

In case the governor cannot carry out the duties of the office because of death, resignation, disability, or absence, the lieutenant governor becomes the governor. The lieutenant governor is much like the vice-president of the United States. The qualifications for lieutenant governor and governor are the same.

Secretary of State

The secretary of state is responsible for many different things in Missouri, all related to providing and preserving information for the public. The secretary of state is in charge of elections, taking care of historic records, overseeing the State Library, the securities industry, and serves as the filing agency for business' records.

The secretary of state is the guardian of the Great Seal of the State of Missouri, and validates official documents of the governor. The office also publishes the Official Manual of the State of Missouri, nicknamed the "blue book."

Before being elected the secretary of state must be a Missouri resident for one year. There are no limits to the number of terms that a secretary of state can serve.

Auditor

The state auditor is responsible for inspecting the finances of all state agencies, boards and official groups, as well as some counties in Missouri. Citizens may ask the auditor to inspect a local government. Audits are performed to make sure that Missouri citizens' tax dollars are used responsibly. The auditor is nicknamed the "watchdog" for taxpayers.

The qualifications for state auditor and governor are the same.

Treasurer

The state treasurer is the guardian of the state's money. The treasurer manages and invests the state's money. The treasurer also handles the Unclaimed Property Program, which attempts to return forgotten funds deposited in banks to their owners.

The treasurer has the same requirements as the secretary of state, but is limited to serving two four-year terms.

Attorney General

The attorney general serves as the lawyer for the state, representing the interests of Missouri government agencies and its citizens. The attorney general also gives legal advice to statewide officers such as the governor and secretary of state, as well as the legislature, and other state and local government agencies.

The attorney general must be an attorney and must live in Jefferson City while in office.

Missouri Legislature

The Missouri legislature, known as the General Assembly, is composed of two "houses." The upper house is called the Senate, and the lower and larger of the two is called the House of Representatives. The legislature is in session from January to May each year.

Each house decides its own rules and procedures and is required to keep a daily record of its work. The General Assembly discusses important issues facing the state. They address some of these issues by writing bills which can change or create laws. The governor must sign a bill in order for it to become a law.

Senate

There are 34 members in the Senate, who each represent about 155,000 people. Senate terms are four years, with one-half of the Senate up for election every two years. Senate candidates must be at least 30 years of age, a qualified Missouri voter for three years, and a resident of their district for at least one year.



When the lieutenant governor is not presiding over the Senate, the president pro tem, elected by the members of the Senate, presides over the Senate most of the time and is the Senate's main officer.

The Senate also approves most of the appointments made by the governor to head state agencies and to serve on state boards and commissions.

House of Representatives

The House of Representatives has 163 members, who each represent about 31,000 people. House terms are for two years. House candidates must be at least 24 years of age, a qualified voter of the state for two years, and a resident of their district for at least one year.

The speaker of the House, elected by the members of the House, presides over the House and is its main officer.

The Missouri Judicial System

The judicial branch of Missouri government has three levels: circuit, appeals and supreme. All judges must be licensed to practice law in Missouri and are required to retire at age 70.

At the trial level are the circuit and associate circuit courts. Missouri has 45 judicial circuits, divided along county lines. Every circuit contains at least one circuit judge and at least one associate circuit judge for each county within the circuit. Associate circuit judges must be at least 25 years of age, a qualified voter of Missouri, and a resident of the county. Circuit judges must be at least 30 years of age, a citizen of the United States at least 10 years, a qualified voter of Missouri at least three years, and a resident of the circuit at least one year. Circuit judges have six-year terms, while associate circuit judges have four-year terms. Circuit courts handle civil and criminal trials.

The next level is the appellate court. There are three appeals court districts in Missouri, located in St. Louis, Kansas City and Springfield. The courts of appeals hear cases from lower courts whose decisions have been appealed and which are not reserved exclusively for the Missouri Supreme Court. Appeals court judges must be at least 30 years old, residents of their district, U.S. citizens for at least 15 years, and Missouri voters for nine years before their selection. Appellate judges are appointed, and then retained by a favorable vote of the people every 12 years.

The Missouri Supreme Court, the state's highest court, hears cases appealed from the courts of appeals or those involving the death penalty, a U.S. treaty or statute, the Missouri Constitution, the state's revenue laws, and the title to any state office. The Supreme Court also supervises all lower courts in the state.

There are seven judges on the Supreme Court, which have the same qualifications and terms as appeals court judges. The chief justice position is rotated between members every two years.

Amendment XXVI¹

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States, who are 18 years of age or older, to vote, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of age.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XIX

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XV

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

¹) <http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/constitution.amendmentxxvi.html>

History of U.S. Voting laws ¹

- 1778–1860:** Under the U.S. Constitution, the basic regulation of voting was left up to the states; voting may have been restricted to males, whites, property owners
- 1868:** 14th Amendment ratified: made former slaves citizens and gave them full civil rights
- 1870:** 15th Amendment ratified: prohibited using racial discrimination to deny anyone the right to vote
- 1920:** 19th Amendment ratified: gave women the right to vote
- 1964:** Voting Rights Act passed: prohibited use of literacy tests in many Southern states and gave federal government power to ensure minorities were not prevented from registering to vote
- 1970:** Voting Rights Act amended: made literacy tests illegal in all states
- 1971:** 26th Amendment ratified: lowered the voting age to 18 for all state and national elections

The Right to Vote was Earned ²

Between the years of 1955–1965, the Civil Rights Movement in America was in full swing. After nearly a decade of events such as “sit-ins” to overturn the “Jim Crow” laws, which segregated people by race in hotels, restaurants, and most other public forums, protests, and boycotts, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. It nullified local laws and practices that prevented minorities from voting. Prior to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, in some areas of the South blacks were not allowed to vote, and blacks who attempted to register to vote or organize or assist others to attempt to register to vote risked losing their homes, their jobs, and in some cases, their lives. The struggle to obtain voting rights for minorities was great, in terms of time and lives lost in the process. The United States Constitution guarantees the permanent voting rights of African Americans as a result of these strong efforts.

1) *Mid-Valley Online Support Pages*. Newspapers in Education. Lee Enterprises. 2002. <http://www.mvonline.com/nie/aba-guide/responsibility.html>

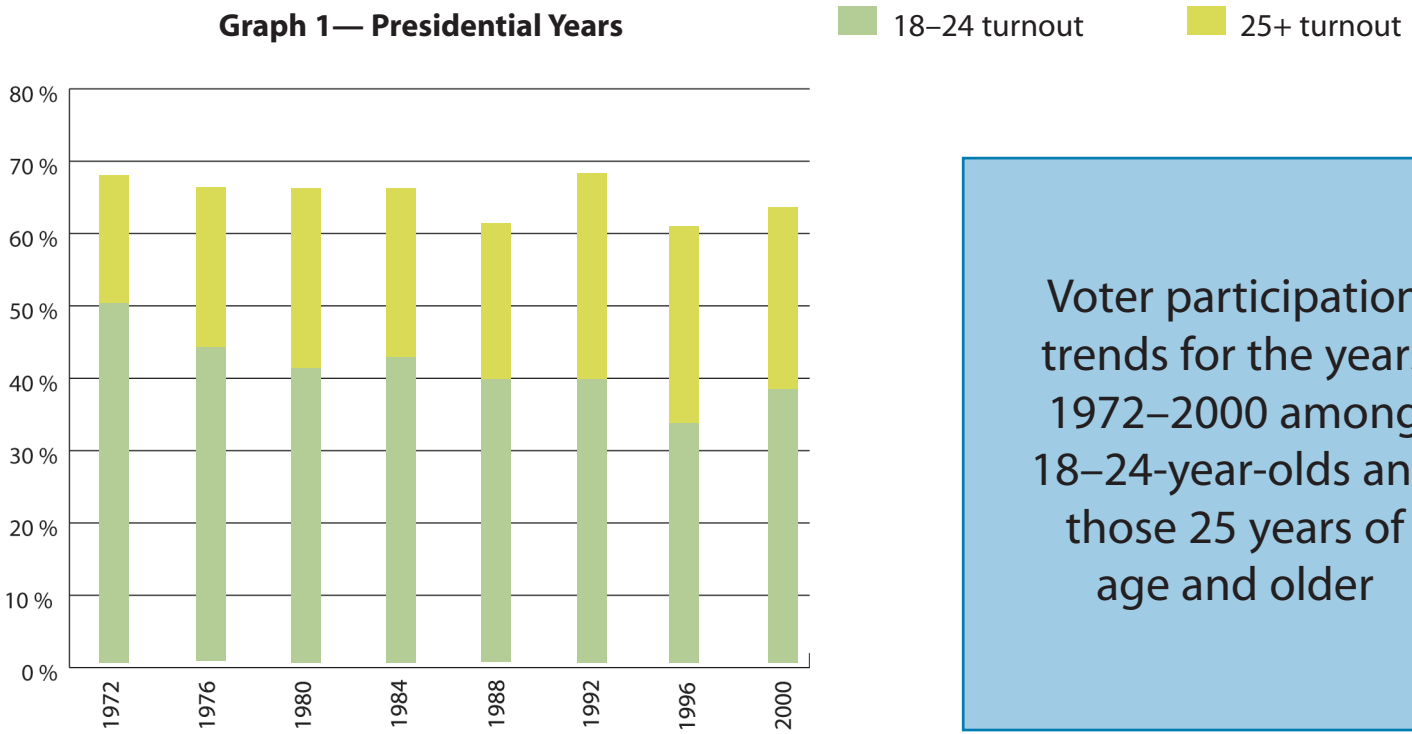
2) *The Civil Rights Movement 1955-1965: Introduction Home Page*. Cozzens, Lisa. 22 Jun. 1998. <http://www.watson.org/~lisa/blackhistory/civilrights-55-65/index.html>

AFRO-AMERICAN ALMANAC-African-American History Resource. United States Department of Justice. 2 Apr. 1998. <http://www.toptags.com/aama/voices/commentary/voting.htm>

National Museum of American History: Timeline. Smithsonian Institute. 2003. <http://americanhistory.si.edu/timeline/07sitin.htm>

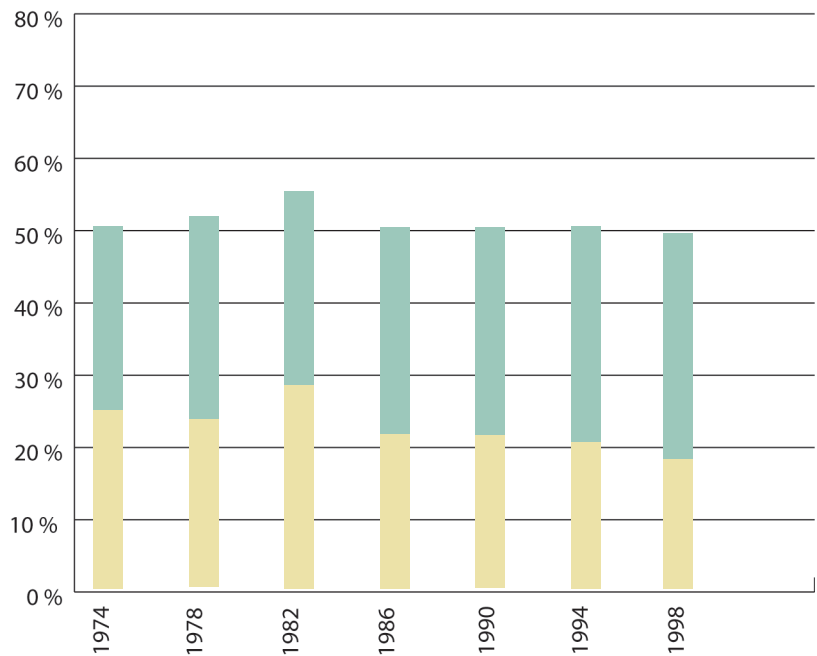


Graph 1— Presidential Years



18–24 turnout 25+ turnout

Graph 2— Alternate Years



Source: Data courtesy of The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement

Glossary of Terms¹

citizenship—the position of being a citizen of a country with all the rights, duties, and privileges that come with it.

civic duty—the duty/responsibility of every citizen toward their community and government.

community—a group of people who live together in the same place.

Constitution—1) the basic principles used to govern a state, country or organization. 2) the document containing the law and plan of the government of the United States.

democracy—1) a government that is run by the people who live under it. In a democracy, the people may run the government indirectly or elect representatives who govern them. 2) A country in which the government is a democracy. The United States is a democracy.

freedom—1) the condition of being free; liberty. 2) The condition to move or act without being held back.

government—1) the group of people in charge of ruling or managing a country, state, city, or other place. 2) A way of ruling or governing.

history—the story or record of what has happened in the past.

issue—a subject that is being discussed or considered.

ownership—taking responsibility in issues that affect us.

participation—to join with others; take part.

pride—a feeling that one has worth and importance; self-respect.

representation—the state of being represented.

respect—to think of something as special and to treat it that way.

responsibility—the quality or condition of being responsible.

right—a just, moral or lawful claim.

volunteer—a person who offers to help or does something by choice and often without pay.

vote—the formal expression of a wish or choice. A vote can be taken by ballot, by voice, or by a show of hands.

15th Amendment—passed in 1870, gave black people the right to vote

19th Amendment—passed in 1920, gave women the right to vote

26th Amendment—passed in 1971, lowered the legal voting age in the United States to 18.

1) Merriam-Webster Online. The Language Center. 2003. <http://www.m-w.com/netdict.htm>.
MacMillian Dictionary for children
The World Book Encyclopedea

Youth Volunteer Trends

According to surveys, today's 18–24-year-olds are more likely to volunteer in their communities than ten years ago. Fifty-three percent of 18–24-year-olds said they volunteer on a regular basis for personal gain; unfortunately, very few said they volunteer in political or government realms.¹ According to studies done by the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), data show convincing majorities of young people have donated to a community church (89%), helped an elderly or disabled neighbor (87%), played in organized sports (69%), volunteered at a religious organization (59%), joined a non-political organization (64%), or volunteered in the community (53%).² In comparison, fewer than one-third had written a letter to a newspaper or government official (30%), run for an elected leadership position (24%), participated in a political march or demonstration (16%), volunteered in a political campaign (16%), or joined a political or government organization (14%).³

Non-political volunteerism is more common than political volunteerism due to the negative attitudes that young people hold toward politicians and the political process.⁴

Volunteerism is an important aspect of citizenship and community for several reasons. Volunteerism raises awareness of current issues, creates interest, and contributes to the betterment of society.⁵

Studies show young people who have parents who vote, or who talk about politics with their parents, are more likely to volunteer and share their opinions on current issues and events.⁶

Studies show that events such as 9/11 and the war in Iraq have led to increased interest and involvement among young people in their communities. One survey conducted in fall 2002 stated the number of students who participated in a political rally or demonstration increased 15%. Politics is deemed more important to young people's lives.⁷

While only 32% of 18–24-year-olds voted in the 2000 election, 59% of the respondents to a recent study said they will "definitely be voting" in the 2004 presidential election. Twenty-seven percent said their chances of voting are 50-50, or that they won't vote.⁸

1) *New Millennium Young Voters Project. New Millennium Survey.* National Information Consortium. 2000. National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS). <http://www.stateofthevote.org/mediakit.html>

2) See note 1, above

3) See note 1, above

4) See note 1, above

5) *Youth Voters.* 24 Oct. 2002. The Center for Voting and Democracy. http://www.fairvote.org/turnout/youth_voters.htm
Youth Voting Fact Sheet. Youth Vote Coalition. March 2002. <http://www.youthvote2000.org/info/factsheet.htm>
See note 1, above

6) *NASS Survey on Youth Attitudes.* The Tarrance Group. National Information Consortium. 2000.
<http://www.stateofthevote.org/survey/sect2.htm>

7) *Campus Kids: The New Swing Voter.* Institute of Politics, Harvard University . 2002. <http://www.iop.harvard.edu/2003survey.pdf>

8) See note 7, above

Ways to Get Involved and Participate

- Volunteer for a local campaign
- Register to vote when 18
- Vote when 18 and at all subsequent elections
- Encourage voting by parents, family, and friends who are 18
- Talk to friends, family, and parents about candidates and current issues
- Join a school club
- Pay attention to political advertising
- Read newspapers
- Watch and listen to the news on television and radio
- Surf the Internet for current events
- Visit Internet sites of your elected officials
- Visit campaign Internet sites for more information

Get Involved!

Supplemental Group Projects and Assignments to Complement the Responsible Missourians Initiative

1. In groups of four or five, students are to list the ways they are involved in school, extracurricular activities such as clubs, and their communities. When all members of the group have listed their involvement, they should also list the reasons for their involvement in the different activities, such as sports, scouting, and church groups, as well as reasons for not being involved in other activities. Each group then will present their information to the class. The teacher should lead a discussion on the future benefits of being involved at a young age—that a strong, solid foundation of participation as a young person will translate into higher involvement and knowledge of community and current events as an adult.
2. Groups should then be encouraged to list possible ways to become involved in school, the community, and extracurricular activities that have not yet been mentioned. After the list is completed, every group member should sign it. The lists should be displayed in the classroom or elsewhere in the school to encourage involvement and good citizenship among all students.
3. As an in-class assignment or take-home assignment, students are to describe in one page their personal understanding of what it means to be a responsible citizen of Missouri and the United States of America.

Secretary of State Matt Blunt's Responsible Missourians Initiative and the Missouri Department of Education's Framework for Curriculum Development in Social Studies and Communication Arts^{*}
(preparing students for the MAP test)

^{*}complete framework available on-line at <http://www.dese.state.mo.us>

Relevant discussion questions for grades 5-8 from each of the four strands:

Social Studies

◆ Strand 1 ◆

Why have people established governance systems?

I.A Civic-Political Perspective:

- How are national, state, and local governments organized in the U.S.? What are their powers? What do they do? How do/should they impact on people's lives?
- How do/should people get the authority to make, interpret, execute, and enforce rules and laws?

I.B Social-Cultural Perspective:

- Why do groups have governance systems that make decisions binding on their members?
- Why are politics, law, and government found in all societies? How do governments prevent and resolve conflicts and try to meet personal and social needs?
- How have diversity and commonalities in the backgrounds, values, and beliefs of the American people influenced the organization, processes, and decisions of governments in the U.S.?
- How do political decisions lead to social and cultural change? How does social and cultural change impact political decisions?

I.C Historical Perspective:

- What kinds of political systems have people created? How and why have those systems changed over time? Why might they change in the future?
- How did the United States government come to be formed?
- How have democratic principles and ideals evolved and influenced historical events and developments?
- How have the rights and responsibilities of citizens changed over time in the history of the United States?

◆Strand 2◆

How do individuals relate to and interact with groups?

II.A Civic-Political Perspective:

- What are some distinctive characteristics of Americans and their society? How may those characteristics be compared to those found in another society?
- How do characteristics of a society and its people affect the society's government and politics?
- What ideals help define American identity? In what documents may those ideals be found?
- How and why are there disparities between American ideals and realities? How have individuals and groups tried to address them?
- How do political decisions affect relationships among individuals and groups?
- How do political parties and interest groups facilitate citizen participation in political processes?
- How do individuals, groups, communications media, and governments interact with one another in this and other political systems?

II.B Social-Cultural Perspective:

- How do people's needs, interests, roles, and responsibilities change as they get older?
- How do groups influence the thinking and behavior of their members? When is such influence consistent/inconsistent with the common good? What are examples of problems in this area? How should they be addressed?
- How may membership in more than one group offer a person personal benefits, but sometimes lead to dilemmas, such as conflicting loyalties or conflicting demands on time?
- What is leadership? In what variety of ways may it be exercised in groups? Why is it important in a democracy for all citizens to be prepared to assume leadership roles?

II.C Historical Perspective:

- How have changing ideals, beliefs, and values impacted social institutions and interactions among individuals and groups?

◆Strand 3◆

How do events and developments in this and other places relate to us and to each other?

III.A Civic-Political Perspective:

- How does public opinion influence political decision-making? How is public opinion shaped? How well informed is the public on community issues?
- How are actions in one branch or level of government having an impact upon other branches or levels?

- How are decisions of government officials (legislative, executive, or judicial) causing changes, resolving some issues and creating others?
- Why do democratic ideals and principles of government sometimes conflict with one another in specific cases?

◆Strand 4◆

How do the lives of individuals and conditions in society affect each other?

IV.A Civic-Political Perspective:

- How does a person become a citizen? What is the meaning of citizenship in the United States?
- What are personal, political, and economic rights and responsibilities of United States citizens-adults and children?
- How may individuals participate in politics and organizations to achieve personal and social gains?
- How and why are political leadership and public service important for the common good?
- What are examples of social issues and dilemmas citizens and leaders face? How can/should citizens monitor public policy-making, analyze and evaluate issues, and influence policy-making processes?
- How can citizens, including middle school students, have a positive effect on their communities?
- What is the role of the government and government agencies in protecting the individual and the environment?

IV.B Social-Cultural Perspective:

- How do some personal decisions affect others?
- What voluntary organizations serve social needs in the local community?
- How do political decisions have an impact on the lives of people as individuals and as members of groups?
- Which societies allow/do not allow individuals a high degree of personal freedom? What characteristics do those societies have in common?
- How can citizens, including middle school/junior high students, personally or through organizations, work to promote the common good through community service or political activity? Why do people volunteer to participate?

IV.C Historical Perspective:

- How have the actions of individuals served to promote the common good in this and other societies? What were their motivations, goals, challenges, and achievements? How should we evaluate their efforts?
- In what ways have the responsibilities of private citizens to the public good changed/stayed the same over time? Why?

- How have ideas in the Constitution, as changed by amendment and interpretation, and other laws affected relationships between individuals and government and between individuals and institutions in civil society?
- How has the issue of the conflict between the demands of personal responsibility and the demands of civic responsibility varied over time?

Communication Arts

* All seven Social Studies Show-Me Standards are available at <http://www.dese.state.mo.us/standards/ss.html>

◆ Strand 1 ◆

Gather, Analyze and Apply Information and Ideas

- Read, view, listen to, and evaluate written, visual and oral communications.
- Locate and gather information and ideas.
- Process, organize and evaluate information and ideas.

◆ Strand 2 ◆

Communicate Effectively Within and Beyond the Classroom

- Write about, visually represent and discuss written, visual and oral communications.
- Create print and non-print communications to demonstrate understanding of information and ideas.
- Create print and non-print communications for various audiences and for a variety of purposes.
- Create print and non-print communications to publish or formally present information and ideas.
- Participate in informal presentations and discussions.
- Demonstrate proficiency in speaking and writing standard English.

◆ Strand 3 ◆

Recognize and Solve Problems

- Apply communication strategies to identify, understand and solve problems.

◆ Strand 4 ◆

Make Decisions and Act as Responsible Members of Society

- Apply communication skills and strategies to facilitate decision-making.
- Analyze and evaluate decision-making processes involving language use, literature and daily experiences.
- Make informed decisions regarding communications.

Secretary of State Matt Blunt's *Responsible Missourians Initiative* and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's *Show-Me Standards for Social Studies and Communication Arts**

* All seven Social Studies Show-Me Standards are available at <http://www.dese.state.mo.us/standards/ss.html>

Social Studies

Standard #1

In Social Studies, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation which includes **knowledge of principles expressed in the documents shaping constitutional democracy in the United States.**

The *Responsible Missourians Initiative* places a strategic emphasis on First Amendment rights, and the privilege and responsibility these rights afford to young Americans. The voting rights of women and minorities are also emphasized, as much struggle and sacrifice took place to earn those rights for today's young voters.

Standard #2

In Social Studies, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation which includes **knowledge of continuity and change in the history of Missouri, the United States and the world.**

Secretary of State Matt Blunt feels that a solid understanding of history is an integral part of a well-rounded education and is essential to success in today's global community and economy.

Standard #3

In Social Studies, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation which includes **knowledge of principles and processes of governance systems.**

The *Responsible Missourians Initiative* can assist Missouri educators in providing students with the best possible understanding of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Missouri government, as well as the roles of state officers. Also emphasized is the important civic responsibility that falls on young Missourians in the form of volunteer work, education, and voting rights, among other things. Students will learn strategies to become more active citizens, such as reading newspapers or watching the news to stay informed on current events and contacting lawmakers to make their voices heard on issues that interest them.

Standard #7

In Social Studies, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation which includes **knowledge of the use of tools of social science inquiry (such as surveys, statistics, maps, documents)**.

The *Responsible Missourians Initiative* uses research and evidence in the form of documented surveys to illustrate to Missouri students the disturbing decline in voter participation over recent years.

Communication Arts

Standard #3

In Communication Arts, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation that includes knowledge of and proficiency in **reading and evaluating nonfiction works and material (such as biographies, newspapers and technical manuals)**.

The *Responsible Missourians Initiative* encourages students to stay informed on current events by reading newspapers and listening to radio and television broadcasts. The Initiative also stresses the importance of getting information on the records of public officials and issues so that informed choices may be made.

Standard #5

In Communication Arts, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation that includes knowledge of and proficiency in **comprehending and evaluating the content and artistic aspects of oral and visual presentations (such as storytelling, debates, lectures, and multimedia productions)**.

The *Responsible Missourians Initiative* encourages students to exchange ideas with one another on ways to become responsible citizens of Missouri and the United States of America.

Standard #6

In Communication Arts, students in Missouri public schools will acquire a solid foundation that includes knowledge of and proficiency **in participating in formal and informal presentations and discussions of issues and ideas**.

Teacher-led class discussions about citizenship, responsibility and Missouri government foster an exchange of ideas and opinions on these important subjects.

In conclusion, this lesson plan complies with four of the seven Show-Me Standards for Social Studies and three of the seven Show-Me Standards for Communication Arts.

Students should develop a renewed sense of pride and an interest in taking steps to become responsible, educated citizens.

It is especially important that students become inspired to learn about current events, history, voting rights, and political issues that may affect them, directly or indirectly.

Students should come away from the lesson understanding that a democracy is not simply a right for every citizen, but a responsibility.

Sites of Interest for Educators and Students

Missouri Secretary of State's Internet Site: <http://www.sos.mo.gov>

An excellent site for learning more about the State of Missouri!

ABA Division for Public Education: Teachers & Students: Students in Action:

<http://www.abanet.org/publiced/youth/sia/home/html>

Student Central is the place to go for programs, activities, and resources about legal issues and public policies. The glossary can help build your vocabulary of legal and law-related terms. Or take a quiz to test your knowledge of the law.

Student Gateway to the U.S. Government: <http://www.students.gov/>

Students.gov is an excellent resource for students looking for government information and services, on planning and paying for an education, community service, career development, military service, research, reference, and general information on government.

Center for Civic Education: <http://www.civiced.org/curriculum.html>

An important, informative website for teachers interested in civic education. To aid educators in teaching effectively the major components of civic education this site offers lesson plans, syllabi, literature, resource material, and more.

The James F. Ackerman Center for Democratic Citizenship: <http://www.edci.purdue.edu/ackerman/>

The James F. Ackerman Center for Democratic Citizenship's mission is to assume a national leadership role in preparing new generations of American citizens. Focusing on programs, institutes, resources and activities for educators to employ more powerful citizenship programs and opportunities that result in student involvement in schools and communities.

Constitutional Rights Foundation: <http://www.crf-usa.org/>

Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) seeks to instill in our nation's youth a deeper appreciation of citizenship through values expressed in our Constitution and its Bill of Rights, and educate them to become active and responsible members of our society. CRF is dedicated to investing in our youth today, for our country's tomorrow.

America's Promise Homepage: <http://www.americaspromise.org/>

Build the character and competence of our nation's youth with people from every sector of American life by fulfilling Five Promises: 1. Caring Adults 2. Safe Places 3. Healthy Start 4. Marketable Skills 5. Opportunities to Serve.

Corporation for National and Community Service: <http://www.nationalservice.org/>

The Corporation for National and Community Service helps strengthen communities by engaging Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service.

National Youth Leadership Council: <http://www.nylc.org/>

The National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) has as its mission to build vital, just communities through service learning with our nation's young people. As one of America's most prominent advocates of service learning and national service, NYLC is a leader in efforts to reform education and guide youth-oriented public policy.

Learn & Serve America: Corporation for National Service: <http://www.learnandserve.org/>

The Learn and Serve America: Corporation for National Service guides students to become involved in service they can learn from. Links, information, and resources to projects, scholarships, and grants can be located at this website. This site also recognizes schools and students for outstanding civic service.

Youth Service America: <http://www.ysa.org/>

YOUTH SERVICE AMERICA (YSA) is a resource center and premier alliance of more than 300 organizations. The organization is committed to increasing volunteer opportunities to serve locally, nationally or globally.